

THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PROCESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE MONTGOMERY NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
1913-1951

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

Neighborhood centers may be found in practically every city in the United States of America having a population of 250,000 or more.¹

A neighborhood center provides leisure-time activity for persons of all ages who live within a specified area of a city. "One of the purposes of a neighborhood center is to strengthen relationships among people who live in a specified geographic area."² In the establishment of such an agency, and its program, the community organization process is continually at work.

Community organization is one of the more recent processes in social work to become crystalized as such. Therefore, it is not as well defined and consequently it is not as well understood as are the other processes of social work. Often the term is used loosely or incorrectly, and in addition, there are other fields of activity in which community organization is the dominant process. This factor tends to add further to the confusion in the use of the term.

¹John McDowell, "Settlements and Neighborhood Centers," Social Work Year Book, (New York, 1951), p. 451.

²John McDowell, "Neighborhood Centers," Social Work Year Book, (New York, 1949), p. 464.

Community organization is one of the basic methods used by a social agency in its everyday service to the people. It is the all important thing which keeps the agency alive because agencies must work in relation to one another in order to perform an effective job in the communities they serve. Also, it is necessary for agencies with national headquarters to work in relation to their subsidiaries. Therefore, it can be said that the community organization process plays a role major or minor, in the successful functioning of every social agency; large or small, national or local. Johns and DeMarche have stated that everyone concerned with any aspect of social welfare must be concerned with community planning and organization. It is indeed everybody's business.¹

Often the process is found at work without the knowledge of those employing it. According to Wayne McMillen:

The community organization process is used consciously or unconsciously, in many fields of human activity - in politics, in art, in education, in economic life. Whenever individuals and groups seek ways to pool their resources and efforts to achieve an improvement in group life, the community organization process is at work.²

During the past thirty-five years there has been a constant increase in the population of the area served by the Montgomery Neighborhood Center. It now serves all people

¹Ray Johns and David S. DeMarche, Community Organization and Agency Responsibility (New York, 1951), p. 81.

²Wayne McMillen, Community Organization for Social Welfare (Chicago, 1945), p. 24.

living within its range, whereas, originally it was established to serve only members of the Negro race.

The influence of two world wars played an important part in the development of this section of the city of Rochester. During these two periods many people came to the city to work in the war plants. These people came from all parts of the United States and brought with them their ways of thinking, acting, and believing. Therefore, it became the responsibility of the community to provide adequate leisure-time activities for these people which would allow them to do what they wished and, at the same time, orientate them to a new way of life. This responsibility was assumed by the agency.

Purpose of the Study

This study will describe the community organization processes in the development of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center during the period of its existence, 1913 through 1951. It will also denote the trend of development of the functions carried on by the agency and factors in the development of any group work agency.

The Montgomery Neighborhood Center, which functions as a group work agency under the auspices of the Young Women's Christian Association, is, in its present status, the result of more than thirty years operation in various capacities. At this time, Montgomery Neighborhood Center is in a transitional period from a branch of the Young Women's

Christian Association to an independent status as a neighborhood center. In this study will be seen the mechanics of the community organization process at work in the efforts of a community to meet the needs of its people. The role of the community organization process will be shown, not only in the origin and development of the agency, but also in the function of the agency. The process will be seen at work in all areas of activity, from national level to local level and to a particular neighborhood level.

In writing this thesis, it will be the purpose of the writer to do, mainly, two things: (1) to examine the history of the origin, development, and function of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center in applying the community organization process to actual situations; and (2) to examine projects of the Council of Social Agencies and the Young Women's Christian Association in order to determine how the community organization process was utilized in meeting the various situations that faced the community over the period of years that the Montgomery Neighborhood Center has been in existence, and also prior to that time.

Method of Procedure

The material used in preparing this study was gathered from the records of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center; the Young Women's Christian Association, the Council of Social Agencies of Rochester, New York, and from personal contact with persons who have played, and still play, an active and

important part in the progress of the agency. Much of the agency's history has never been written in detail but remains in the memories of persons who guided its destinies from the early beginnings as a branch of the Women's Young Christian Association to its present status of a neighborhood center. All available unpublished material regarding the agency has been utilized.

Scope and Limitations

There are many things involved in the Center's history, however, for purposes of this study, only the factors directly related to the establishment of a center as such, and the modification of functions to meet the needs of the people it serves, will be brought out. Data used will cover a period of years beginning with 1913 and ending with 1951, covering thirty-eight years of service. At no time will it be the writer's intention to evaluate or analyze the effectiveness of the agency's program in any way.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the name of the agency at any given time will refer to the type of program pursued at that time.

The term function in this study will be used in conjunction with the term function as defined by Herbert Aptekar who states: "function simply means the agency's services, and the way in which, or the conditions under

which, they can be granted."¹ Function as used in this study, denotes the program that was offered to the people of the community at any particular time during the period of the agency's development.

¹Herbert Aptekar, Basic Concepts of Social Work (Chapel Hill, 1941), p. 20.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Early Beginnings

The Montgomery Neighborhood Center had its beginning as the result of a move by the Young Women's Christian Association when they established a branch of the YWCA for the purpose of serving Negro women and girls in the city of Rochester, New York.

This decision was the result of the successful formation and progress of a club group formed in the year of 1913 known as the Unity Club.¹ This Club was organized through the efforts of a visitor to the city who in that year pointed out the advantages of such a club. It is here that the community organization process is seen in operation for the first time in the history and development of the agency.

The visitor, a staff member from the National Office of the Young Women's Christian Association, saw the need for the YWCA to organize a group which would provide group activities for the colored women and girls in the city. This lady contacted Miss Lillian Hull, who was, at that time, the Industrial Secretary of the Central Association of the Young Women's Christian Association, and explained the situation

¹Statement by Miss Agnes Kidder, Executive Secretary of the YWCA, Rochester, New York, personal interview, December 13, 1951.

that existed among the colored women of the community. She stressed the need for an organization that would provide some measure of wholesome recreation and leisure-time activity. Miss Hull, following through on the suggestion, discussed the matter with Miss Henry, who was at that time the executive secretary of the Central Association. Miss Henry was receptive of the suggestion and encouraged Miss Hull to move ahead with the proposal. Thus, Miss Hull began and with the help of an interested lay person, a Miss Cromwell, organized a group known as the Unity Club. This was in the year of 1913. The program of this club was centered in supper meetings which were held in churches. The program consisted of handicrafts, home nursing courses, sewing and other activities that were of interest to the group at that particular time. Later the meetings of the Unity Club were moved to the downtown building of the Young Women's Christian Association where the physical equipment was available for the use of the group which allowed for a wider range of activity.¹

In 1913, the population of the city of Rochester, New York was 218,149 and of this number 879 were designated as Negro.² Soon after the formation of the Unity Club, World

¹Statement by Miss Lillian Hull, Industrial Secretary Central Association YWCA, Rochester, New York, personal interview, January 12, 1952.

²Bureau of Municipal Research, Inc., Census figures 1910, Rochester, New York.

War I became more serious and war industries began to flourish in the city and surrounding area. This resulted in many people moving their families to Rochester for the purpose of securing war work, and eventually necessitated the need for additional facilities in all areas of activity including housing and recreation.

Consequently, the area of recreation presented the need for increased services to the people of the community and, as these needs were met by various agencies in the city, the increased Negro population looked to the Young Women's Christian Association to provide services for the Negro women and girls of the city. With this impetus, the work of the Young Women's Christian Association took a more solid form with reference to the needs of the colored women in the community. The activities of the Unity Club were continued and a club secretary was hired, Miss Edna Cook, who was instrumental in forming a younger girls club.

At this time, 1922, the Negro population in the city had increased and Miss Cook, working with the women and girls in the community pointed up the necessity for an established branch of the Young Women's Christian Association specifically for the purpose of serving Negro women and girls.¹

¹Miss Estelle Fitzgerald, "Annual Report of YWCA" (Rochester, New York YWCA Publication, 1932), p. 10 (Mimeographed.)

During the year 1921 serious thought was given to the need for wholesome recreation in leisure-time activities for the Negro people. A group of local citizens organized a committee to study the needs of the Negro people with a view toward the possibility of meeting these needs. An interested lay-person, Mrs. Henry Alvah Strong, became chairman of this committee, which had as its main objective to do whatever was necessary to cope with the problems of the colored women in the city of Rochester. The organization was referred to as the Citizens Study Committee.¹

YWCA Branch Established

The following year the Citizens Study Committee began serious work toward raising the required amount of money for the purchase of a building, and in 1922 the much dreamed of branch of the Young Women's Christian Association was incorporated. The Citizens Study Committee raised \$8605.56 and a building was purchased for \$8250, including the ground. Another \$355.56 was invested in equipment for the building which consisted of ten rooms. The newly established branch of the Young Women's Christian Association was located at thirty Caledonia Avenue, now known as Clarissa Street.²

¹Dorothy Fax, "History of Work with Negroes of Rochester YWCA" (Rochester, New York YWCA Publication, 1946), p. 6 (Mimeographed.)

²Ibid.

The central association of the Young Women's Christian Association was originally established in the city of Rochester in 1883. At that time the purpose of the YWCA was "to promote the temporal, social, mental, moral and religious welfare of young women, especially such as are dependent upon their own exertions for support."¹ It also stated "any woman who was sober was accepted into the association's boarding homes."²

In 1906 the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association was formed and an amendment to the constitution was adopted and the purpose then became:

...to associate young women in personal loyalty to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord; to lead them into membership and service in the christian church; to promote growth in christian character and service through physical, social, mental, and spiritual training; and to become a social force for the extension of the kingdom of God.³

Endeavoring to do the thing that it was organized to do, the new branch of the Young Women's Christian Association made provisions for spiritual, recreational, social, and educational development through inauguration of a diversified activities

¹Article I of the Constitution of the Young Women's Christian Association of the United States of America.

²Ibid.

³Amendment Adopted 1906 to the YWCA Constitution recommended by the National Executive Committee. Taken from the Young Women's Christian Association, Rochester, New York, 1909.

program. The Branch set up its own Committee of Management which was responsible to the Committee of Management of the Central Association. This group of people met at the Branch building with an expressed purpose of understanding the needs of the colored women in Rochester and giving tangible expression toward meeting these needs. Over a period of many years the Clarissa Street Branch of the Young Women's Christian Association served the social, recreational, educational, and spiritual needs of Negro women and girls in the city of Rochester, New York and surrounding areas.

Other Factors Influencing Development

In 1938 the survey committee of the Rochester Community Chest conducted a survey of the character building agencies in the city. This survey was directed by Mr. Arthur Swift who was brought to the city of Rochester for this purpose by the Council of Social Agencies. Among the recommendations of his study in 1938 dealing directly with the Montgomery Neighborhood were the following:

...to serve the urgent needs of Rochester Negro citizens, a joint YWCA-YMCA building be constructed on the property at present occupied by the Clarissa Street Branch of the YWCA...that both the control and the administration of this joint YWCA-YMCA building be equally shared by the two organizations.¹

Before action could be taken on the recommendations made

¹Arthur Swift, A Survey of Character Building Agencies of Rochester, New York (Rochester, 1938), p. 157.

by Mr. Swift, the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association altered its policy regarding segregated branches of the YWCA. In June 1941, Miss Isobelle Lawson, field secretary of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association recommended that the Clarissa Street Branch of the YWCA be replaced with a YWCA Neighborhood Center. This was in keeping with the decision of the National Board that all segregated branches of the Young Women's Christian Association be abolished in all cities where community patterns permitted such action. The recommendation made by Miss Lawson was adopted by the Executive Board of the Rochester YWCA and consequently this adoption resulted in the dissolution of the Committee of Management of the Clarissa Street Branch of the YWCA. In its place, an advisory committee was formed. Its purposes were: to interpret the needs of the newly formed YWCA Neighborhood Center to the executive board; to formulate programs to meet the needs of the local community, and to interpret and assist with questions of interracial interest.¹ The major difference between the Clarissa Street Branch of the YWCA and the YWCA Neighborhood Center was that the Branch was a separate body established primarily for Negroes, whereas the YWCA Neighborhood Center, also a part of the total association,

¹ Dorothy Fax, op. cit., p. 7.

was not limited to Negroes alone. In addition, Negro members participated in the total program of the YWCA as an integral part of various existing groups.¹

Analysis of Community Organization

In this chapter the process of community organization is employed in many of the activities which were in progress during the years that the agency was in existence and also during the period of preparation for the establishment of it. There is no definite formula for chronological procedure in the process community organization, however, there are certain factors pertinent to success.² The formula to be followed is, fact-finding; determination of need; program formulation; and education and interpretation.³ These are considered basic in the process of community organization and in order to accomplish this a worker must use many techniques, but the sequence cannot be definitely established. For instance, interpretation might come before fact-finding begins just as determination of need may precede either or both of the others.

Thus, the first group of the Young Women's Christian Association formed the organization known as the Unity Club.

¹Ibid.

²Ray Johns and David S. DeMarche, op. cit., p. 156.

³Ibid., pp. 150-157.

This club was the outgrowth of the efforts of the industrial secretary and an interested layman who acted on a suggestion by a visitor to the city in which it was stated that the YWCA should take steps to provide for leisure-time activities for the colored women and girls of the city. The method demonstrated is the importance of being able to discover need and interpret need to those who can take responsible action. The professional staff of the Central Association took the proper steps to set up a group which became the media of strengthening public opinion and public support for more concrete action when the proper time arrived.

Through the activities of the Unity Club the social workers were concerned with the important part of the method of stimulating people to use their own powers for the cooperative improvement of group life.¹ In this instance the social workers used the supper meetings, the handicrafts, sewing classes, home nursing, etc., as a means of stimulation in that these things familiarized the members with some of the activities and experiences that could be derived from a YWCA program. Therefore, when the time arrived for more concentrated action of forming a citizens committee for the purpose of raising funds to establish a branch of the YWCA, the members of the Unity Club were available for service. This group, having had actual experience in YWCA activity,

¹Wayne McMillen, op. cit., p. 25.

was able to form a nucleus for a committee whose purpose was to help mould public opinion and solicit public support for the job that faced them.

"Community organization assembles data in order to help people to ascertain what a particular community needs and how its needs may be met."¹ This statement points out another segment of the process. The Rochester Community Chest, in cooperation with the Council of Social Agencies, employed the above process when it conducted the survey of the character building agencies in Rochester. In this survey, the director, Mr. Arthur Swift, pointed out the work that the agencies were doing. In addition, he made recommendations relative to the needs of the community at that time and also, recommendations as to the way in which these needs could be met.

¹Ibid., p. 31.

CHAPTER III

TRANSFORMATION INTO A NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

The Montgomery Neighborhood Center, since its inception as a branch of the Young Women's Christian Association, has been located in the southwestern part of the city of Rochester, New York. It was originally set up primarily to serve that part of the city's Negro population living within the approximate area which is today designated as census tract number three. According to the United States Bureau of Census, census tracts are small areas having a population usually between 3,000 and 6,000. Certain large cities are subdivided in this way for statistical and local administration purposes.¹

In this area of the city served by the Montgomery Neighborhood Center, people of all races and nationalities resided. In the years preceding 1940 the Negro population of the entire city of Rochester never exceeded 3,000; and there was no large concentration of Negroes in any one section of the city. Therefore, there was no serious situation around recreation and leisure-time activities. The Negro people living in the area served by the agency were provided with adequate recreation services, and the consensus of opinion in the city was that the physical plant of the agency was

¹United States Bureau of Census, Population and Housing Statistics for Census Tracts, Rochester, New York, Government Printing Office, 1942, p. 15.

apparently sufficient to do the job.

During World War II, war industries again flourished much the same as they did during World War I. In the year of 1941, as a result of executive order number 8802, the Fair Employment Practices Committee was established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and manufacturing plants having contracts from the United States Government were obliged to hire workers without discrimination due to race, color, or creed.¹ This resulted in the employment of many Negro workers throughout the country. Many Negro people from various parts of the country came to Rochester to seek employment. However, the Negro people formed only a small segment of the total number of persons who came to Rochester for the purpose of securing work in war industries. With this increase in population, housing conditions naturally became crowded, and following the country-wide cultural pattern of housing discrimination, the Negro people coming to Rochester were forced to find living accommodations in a section of the city so designated. Therefore, the population of the southwestern part of the city of Rochester increased considerably and many more people looked to this agency for recreation and leisure-time activities than in the years prior to 1940.

An aid in coping with the situation of the increased

¹ FEPC Reference Manual, 1948 Edition, Community Relations Advisory Council, New York, p. 36.

population might have been the fact that the Young Women's Christian Association had the doors of its downtown facilities always open to all persons regardless of national origin or racial identity, and invited all persons to participate in its program. This was in keeping with its national policy of abolishing segregated branches of the association wherever community patterns permitted. However, due to previous cultural backgrounds, many of these immigrants hesitated to make use of the downtown YWCA, and this was true of the Negro women and girls as well as others.

Recognizing New and Expanding Needs

Facilities.--The presence of the large Sampson Naval Base within fifty miles of the city of Rochester made it necessary to have additional recreation facilities available. This was due to the fact that there were many Negro servicemen stationed at the Sampson Base and, although there was a USO club (United Service Organizations) in the city, many of the Negro servicemen looked for other activities during their leave time.

As a result, the function of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center was altered to include more coeducational activities in an effort to meet the needs of these servicemen.

It was soon realized that the physical facilities of Montgomery Neighborhood Center were not sufficient to accommodate the large number of persons who were in attendance and plans were made for the addition of a recreation hall to

be erected adjoining the main building. The possibility of doing this was the result of funds that had been willed to the Young Women's Christian Association in 1935 by Mrs. Helen Montgomery. The funds given by Mrs. Montgomery were to be used in the interest of Negro women in Rochester within a period of twenty-five years. In addition to the funds willed by Mrs. Montgomery there was an amount given from the capital fund of the Young Women's Christian Association plus a large gift from an interested lay-person, Mrs. Henry Alvah Strong. In 1944 an addition to the main building of Montgomery Neighborhood Center was built at a cost of approximately \$9,000. This building was large enough to permit dancing and active indoor games, and was named in honor of Mrs. Helen Barrett Montgomery.¹

Staff.--At this time the professional staff of the agency consisted of one full-time worker and several part-time workers. However, because of the increase in size, it soon became evident that at least one more full-time worker was necessary and in this same year, 1944, a second full-time professional worker was added to the staff of the agency.²

The pressure of war-time activity began to have its effect on the city of Rochester as a whole and with the increased seriousness of the situation the Council of Social

¹Dorothy Fax, op. cit., p. 8.

²Statement by Miss Agnes Kidder, op. cit.

Agencies entered the picture with a view toward alleviation of the resulting problems. The Council of Social Agencies assembled representatives from all agencies and laymen from various sections of the city and organized a new department in the Council. This department, organized in 1944, was known as the Department of Neighborhood Services. One of its primary purposes was to become aware of the increased needs of a particular area of the city and assist agencies serving this area to extend and strengthen their services in order to meet this increased demand. It was planned that this would be accomplished by the formation of groups in the troubled areas. These groups were known as Neighborhood Councils and sponsored recreational programs at night using facilities of the public schools.¹

In the case of Montgomery Neighborhood Center, the Neighborhood Services Department of the Council of Social Agencies lent its assistance in the beginning by paying the salary of the part-time workers. In 1949 the Department of Neighborhood Services began paying the salary of one full-time worker at the Center.²

Finances.--The program of the Neighborhood Services Department has also been aided by the New York State Youth

¹Minutes from the Meetings of the Neighborhood Services Committee, Council of Social Agencies, Rochester, New York, 1944-45.

²Statement by Miss Agnes Kidder, op. cit.

Commission which was set up in 1945 in an effort to curb delinquency.¹ This commission, originally established to exist for a period of five years, has since been extended for an additional three years and will expire June 30, 1953, unless subsequently extended.² One of its chief functions is to give financial aid to communities for use in programs that were geared for prevention of delinquency. Under this program the State Youth Commission contributed approximately one half as much as a local community contributes to work by agencies in the community geared toward prevention of delinquency.³

Much of the work done in Rochester, toward the prevention of delinquency, has been done in the area of the city served by Montgomery Neighborhood Center and its program is aided greatly by the Commission in the form of funds for operational expenses.

Structure.--Although the Center was often referred to as Montgomery Neighborhood Center, the name of the agency was not officially changed until October 1950. At this time the agency was officially converted into a neighborhood center. The conversion was made with a view toward the Montgomery Neighborhood Center's ultimately, having incorporate

¹The Laws of the State of New York, 1945, Chapter 556.

²The Laws of the State of New York, 1950, Chapter 318.

³Thomas J. Curran, Manual for the Use of the Legislature of the State of New York (Albany, 1950), p. 695.

responsibility for all group work and recreation in the area including athletic programs which had previously been a program of the YMCA on a detached basis.

Formal plans for the incorporation of Montgomery Neighborhood Center began in October 1949. Mrs. Marian Dent, a local social worker, and a member of the Board of the Central Association, was selected as chairman of the Advisory Committee of Montgomery Neighborhood Center. By October 1950, the agency was officially known as Montgomery Neighborhood Center under the auspices of the Young Women's Christian Association. However, at the time of the conversion the agency was not completely independent, therefore, the organizational arrangement of the governing body was somewhat different from that of a completely independent agency. Instead of having a board of directors with full autonomy, it had an advisory committee which had one member of the Neighborhood Services Department of the Council of Social Agencies in attendance at the meetings. The role of the Neighborhood Services Department was to make recommendations to the committee through the member of its department who would be in attendance at the meetings of the advisory committee of the Center. The advisory committee was in turn responsible to the board of directors of the Central Association of the Young Women's Christian Association.¹

¹Statement by Mrs. Marian Dent, Chairman, Advisory Committee Montgomery Neighborhood Center, Rochester, New York, personal interview, January 17, 1952.

The Advisory Committee of Montgomery Neighborhood Center was selected in the following manner. The President of the Board of the Central Association of the Young Women's Christian Association appointed one of its Board members to act as chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center. The appointed chairman, along with the executive director of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center, selected laymen from the neighborhood served by the agency to serve as members of the advisory group. Prior to this time the agency's committee was selected from active laymen within the membership of the branch of the Young Women's Christian Association. There was no rule with reference to the minimum or maximum number of members of the advisory committee, but it was felt that all groups served by the agency should be represented.¹

Since there were twelve groups active within the agency, the first advisory committee had a membership of twelve persons representing, not only groups within the agency but, including persons living in the neighborhood and various interests in the community. At this time, in keeping with the precedent, there were only women on the advisory committee of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center. However, Mrs. Dent was instrumental in inaugurating a momentous move when, realizing that the agency no longer existed for women only,

¹Ibid.

she suggested that all shades of opinion in the community should be represented and recommended that some men be placed on the advisory committee. Therefore, in January 1951, for the first time in the history of the agency, men were invited to participate in the activities of the advisory committee with a view toward full fledged membership on the committee. The men were not at that time official members but were invited to sit in on the committee in order that they might be orientated into the activities and purpose of the agency in the community. In September 1951, the men on the advisory committee of Montgomery Neighborhood Center became members, officially. This was significant because the agency was still under the auspices of the Young Women's Christian Association.¹

Individualizing the Community

In October 1950, when the name of Montgomery Neighborhood Center under the auspices of the Young Women's Christian Association became official, two new staff members were hired, one as executive and the other as assistant executive. Both of these people were new to the city and to the area served by the Center, therefore they were not familiar with people of the area and had no idea of the background of the families with whom they were to work.²

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

At this same time, a request came to the executive director of the Council of Social Agencies. A group of students who were residents of Rochester and enrolled in a course in Research and Statistics at the University of Buffalo, School of Social Work, was assigned a class project in which it was to participate in an actual research situation. Through the instructor from the University a request was made to the executive of the Council of Social Agencies, Mr. Oscar Koult, that the members of the class be allowed to do a research project. Mr. Koult, knowing the situation that existed at the Montgomery Neighborhood Center, immediately thought that the students could interview the families of the children that attended the Center. He reasoned that this would give the staff of the agency some insight into the families with which they were going to work. He contacted the instructor from the University of Buffalo and discussed the matter with him. The instructor, Mr. George Montgomery, informed the students at the next meeting of the class that a project had been proposed. After Mr. Montgomery's presentation the students of the class expressed a desire to proceed with the study. Mr. Montgomery then contacted the proper persons that would be in a position to know the background of the agency and the necessity for such a study and a meeting was arranged for the purpose of orientation of the students.

Mr. Montgomery called together Mrs. Betty Mills, the

director of the Neighborhood Services Department of the Council of Social Agencies, Mrs. Barbara Groton, executive director of Montgomery Neighborhood Center, and Mr. Robert March, assistant executive director of Montgomery Neighborhood Center. These persons met with the members of the class and explained their respective functions and interests in the study. They also gave the class group some background information about the Center and how such a study could prove valuable in helping the staff to develop a program that would meet the needs of the people in the neighborhood. Also, it was pointed out that at the same time, the students would be in a position to do an interpretive and public relations job with the persons interviewed. It was explained by the staff members of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center that, from their experience with persons coming to the Center, they felt that there was much confusion regarding the agency and its new name. Therefore, it would be necessary to not only interview the families with a view to gaining information relative to their living conditions and interests, but to interpret to them the place of the agency in the community and how it differed from the branch of the Young Women's Christian Association in organization, function and purpose.

The next step in preparation for the study of the families living in the area served by the Montgomery Neighborhood Center was to discuss the things that would have to be covered in order to gain the desired information.

After much discussion it was decided that information necessary would be such things as nationality and race of a family, the number of persons in the family that were employed and where, whether or not there were in-laws living in the home, family interests and what they would like to see in the way of program at the Center, and whether or not they had heard of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center, as a neighborhood center, from their children, their neighbors, or saw the new name on the front of the building where the agency is located. In addition, it was decided that the children should also be interviewed in order to ascertain their interests and in the way it was felt that it would be possible to observe the parents reaction to the children's interests. It was felt that, during the interview, the interviewer should present a brief, concise explanation of the difference between the Clarissa Street Branch of the Young Women's Christian Association and the Montgomery Neighborhood Center and, at the same time, endeavor to "feel" out the attitude of the parents toward the agency and their children's participation in its program.

As an aid in determining which families should be interviewed the class was given the names and addresses of the children that attended the Center regularly. There were seventy-nine names and addresses which included children from all sections of the area served and a few from outside the area. These names were divided equally among members of

the research class and they proceeded to go individually to contact the families of the children whose names they were given.

On completion of the study it was found that, of the total number of families registered, eight had either moved or the wrong address was given. The total number of families interviewed was seventy-one. Of this number eleven families were listed as white and sixty families were listed as Negro.

Of this number, fifty-three had some knowledge of Montgomery Neighborhood Center and eighteen had no knowledge. In thirty cases it was found that the manner in which persons had gained previous knowledge of the agency was as a result of their child attending and participating in the activities.

Coherent with the agency's desire to know the amount of participation was the desire to know the kinds of activities that the children and adults would like to have inaugurated. In answer to this question it was found that the adults wanted groups such as, PTA type, discussion clubs, bowling parties, fencing, etc.

Many of the persons living in the area served by the agency had various outside interests and it was felt that it would be advantageous to the staff if they knew what some of these were in order that they might be considered in future program planning. In the survey this question was asked and it was learned that the largest number of adults belonged to the "citizens club" in the particular area and to PTA. Outside of

these there was no other outside affiliation except in a few cases where a person would be a member of a church group, social club, etc. In the main, there was very little outside activity of a recreational nature.

The employment picture was also felt to be important because this would be an aid in planning activities for both adults and children, therefore, the study group asked for this information. Of the total number of families interviewed, only in nine families was there unemployment. In thirty-two cases only the father was employed and in twelve cases only the mother was employed, and in eighteen families both parents were employed.

The staff of Montgomery Neighborhood Center also was interested in having a knowledge of the attitude of the people toward the agency, therefore, in the family study this feeling was explored. None of the persons interviewed expressed any aversion toward the agency or the program and all were amenable to it because they felt that if the agency kept the children off the streets they would be doing a great service.

The information gained from the study was turned over to the staff of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center for use in setting up a program that would meet the needs and desires of the people in the community who were served by the agency. The agency's program was geared to follow the desires of the people in the area and the advisory committee of the agency

began to take steps toward making the agency completely independent. At the present time, January 1951, the Committee has appointed a group whose job will be to write the articles of incorporation for the agency.

Analysis of Community Organization Process

In this chapter we see evidence once again that "community organization is one of the basic professional responsibilities of a social agency."¹ Although there hardly can be seen any single, directing force behind the process, certain definite steps can be observed.

Determination of social need is seen as the initiating factor of this process, when recognition of population growth as a result of an influx of war workers and military personnel, rendered existing recreation services inadequate to meet the needs of the Negro element of the community.

A second step is noted when we observed the development of inter-agency relationships between local agency, central planning and state agency. Through these relationships the integrated use of necessary resources was achieved.

Another step is discernible in the formulation of program. The development of a coeducational program, expanded staff, expanded facilities, and the final incorporation of a neighborhood center all point to action to alleviate need.

¹Wayne McMillen, op. cit., p. 156.

Likewise, the organization of the Department of Neighborhood Services and the resulting Neighborhood Councils can be viewed similarly.

The survey carried out by the class of social work students, clearly points out fourth and fifth steps, namely fact-finding and education. The movement to integrate men in the Advisory Committee comes under the heading of Education.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In writing this thesis the writer has (1) looked introspectively into the history of the origin, development, and function of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center in applying the community organization process to actual situations, and (2) examined the projects of the Council of Social Agencies and the Young Women's Christian Association in order to determine how the community organization process was operating in these various situations that faced the community over the period of years that the Montgomery Neighborhood Center was in existence, and also prior to that time.

Some organizations within the area of social work carry on the process of community organization as a primary function, such as the Council of Social Agencies, which is established for the express purpose of carrying on community organization. Other organizations use the process as a secondary function, such as the Young Women's Christian Association, whose staff and executive engaged in community organization in order to promote the advancement of the total social welfare of the community as it specifically relates to their assigned scope and function. This was clearly seen when the Young Women's Christian Association sought to aid the community to meet the needs of many of its Negro citizens through the establishment of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center and

changing its function to keep pace with the cultural changes.

It can be seen that one of the principles of community organization which was constantly applied was that social need is the basis for social change. It was a major job to help the community to achieve an awareness of its needs and a desire to meet them. These needs were placed before the community in an effort to help it become aware of its responsibilities and opportunities. In addition, they were adjusted to the thinking of the people. In this way it was possible to begin where the thinking of the community was and bring it along to the realization that its needs were not being met. Once this was accomplished, it was then possible to proceed into a new area of activity.

In community organization the gathering of facts is very important to the progress of social welfare in a community. Often it has been found that competent pieces of research have resulted in few benefits to the community in which this research is made. Therefore, fact-finding and interpretation are complementary activities. That is, linked together they can be productive and the importance of the gathering of facts has been pointed out. The Young Women's Christian Association, through the Montgomery Neighborhood Center, was in a position to know some of the needs of the Negro people in the city. Also, the Council of Social Agencies kept abreast with the times by maintaining close contact with all segments of the population. Again this fact was seen when the Council of

Social Agencies suggested a research study of the living conditions and interests of the people living in the area served by Montgomery Neighborhood Center.

The continuous gathering of facts throughout the years made it possible for the agency to alter its function when the proper time arrived and in this way they were better able to serve the needs of the people. As the Negro population increased, both in the area served by the Montgomery Neighborhood Center and in the city of Rochester, the Center planned its program to meet the situation.

A major aspect of the development of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center has been the development of relationships between agencies and individuals. From its inception as the Unity Club much of its forward movement has stemmed directly from the qualitative use of these relationships. The formulation of program and the constant revision of it to meet new needs has helped to give people confidence in themselves and their organizations, a confidence which makes it possible to continue the ever renewing cycle of the community organization process. These factors played an important part in the origin, development, and function of the Montgomery Neighborhood Center in Rochester, New York.

In concluding we can say that the process of community organization in social work can be compared with the democratic process. The process of community organization is a democratic way of organizing the resources of a community

to meet the needs of the people residing there. It implies leadership, but not dictatorship. The community is involved first and last, because it is the community that must become cognizant of a need and must take steps to meet this need if a more lasting solution is to be reached. However, it is never the prerogative of a community to decide what it wants to do and how it wants to accomplish its desires without giving full consideration to all of the people of the community. Just as government is for the people, so is community organization for the people. Also, just as government is by the people, so, too, community organization is by the people. The process is completely democratic from start to finish and entails responsibility in the community itself to accomplish a goal. As we have seen, this philosophy is consistent with the dynamic view of the community. It is truly a means to an end.

APPENDIX

SCHEDULE USED IN FAMILY SURVEY

Name _____ Address _____ Race _____

SOURCE INFORMATION RE: M.H. Knew child attending _____ From child _____

Knew of M.H. _____ Knew as Y _____ No information _____

Neighbors _____ Publicity _____ Other _____

Previous Contact: Parent Y Member _____ Child attending _____

Siblings attending _____ Others in family _____

Interest in present program: Adult attends _____ Child attends _____

Activities: (list) Parents Child

Activities would like in program: (list)

Likes about program:

Dislikes about program:

Recommends about program: _____

Other affiliations:

Interest in neighborhood activities: _____

Special comments or questions:

Home: Single _____ Multiple _____ No. rooms _____ Adequate _____

Housekeeping _____

M.H. should contact:

Remarks: (Continue on reverse side)

APPENDIX B

The Purpose

The purpose of the Commission is to study and analyze the problems of youth and the prevention of delinquency; to provide State financial aid to municipalities which operate approved youth bureaus, youth services, and recreation projects, foster cooperation of state departments, municipalities, public and private agencies and local groups and committees; foster educational programs in connection with delinquency and youth needs.¹

APPENDIX C

How Eligibility is Established

Recreation and youth service projects may be established by any county, city, town, or village upon application to, and with approval of the Commission; the state to reimburse one-half the amount of expenditures, but not to exceed \$250.00 for every 1000 children as shown by the 1940 federal census.²

¹John S. Means, The New York Red Book (New York, 1951), p. 456.

²Thomas J. Curran, Manual for the Use of the Legislature of the State of New York (New York, 1950), p. 699.

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